

Utah Citizens Advisory Committee Minutes

March 21, 2002
Tooele City Hall

Members Present:

Sid Hullinger (SH)
Jane Bowman (JB)
Gene White (GW)
Beverly White (BW)
Deborah Kim, Chair (DK)
Dan Bauer (DB)
Geoff Silcox (GS)
Dennis Downs (DD)
Michael Keene, State Science Advisor (MK)

Members excused:

Rosemary Holt
David Ostler

1. Call to order- minutes

The meeting called to order by Debbie Kim at 6.30 p.m. Introductions were made to present the new State Science Advisor, Dr. Michael Keene and Mr. Dale Ormond, Interim Plant Manager at TOCDF. He is taking the place of Mr. Jim Hendricks, who was re-assigned to Maryland. Minutes from the November meeting and the January meeting were distributed. Corrections were made to the minutes. This was included with the distributed copy. A motion to accept minutes as printed was made by Beverly White, and seconded by Geoff Silcox. The minutes were accepted as written.

Agenda item two (Interpretation of Sub-Clinical levels of TWA & Cumulative effects over time) was postponed until the May meeting. This was done in order to have the appropriate technical expertise available to present to the CAC.

2. Waste Neutralization/Water Hydrolysis of Chemical Weapons

Jason Groenwald (JG), the Director of Families Against Incinerator Risk (FAIR), made a video presentation demonstrating water hydrolysis of chemical weapons as an alternate method of chemical weapons destruction. The video presentation lasted about 10 minutes. No other presentation materials were distributed. Jason discussed the alternate ways of waste neutralization. He suggested the formation of a task force to look at alternate ways of neutralization. There was discussion on the matter. The CAC will take the matter under advisement.

A question was asked by Geoff Silcox regarding the disposal of the energetics. The answer was delayed until after the next presenter.

A second presentation made by Mr. Kevin Flamm, Project Manager of Alternative Technologies Approaches in Aberdeen and Indiana. The

presentation was about water in-situ neutralization. No presentation materials were distributed. CAMDS is doing some testing for the in-situ neutralization method for the Newport facility. This is preliminary testing that is being conducted. Several slides were shown and great detail was discussed about the in-situ neutralization process of VX and Mustard (HD).

Q-SH-After the neutralization has been completed, discussion about items going to an incinerator that is there, what is the volume? More or less than what is in the ton container?

A-10% more waste, slight increase relative to the original volume. With the neutralization of mustard there is a 20-fold increase in the waste generated because of the volume difference. With this process there is just a small amount of water added.

Q-SH-What is done with the waste from mustard?

A-The waste is transported to the Dupont facility(for the Aberdeen MD site),. Dupont will introduce the hydrolysate into their biotreatment facility

Q-DK-Can you describe more about the biotreatment process? Are there particular cultures used ?

A-There is specific bacteria that are used. Basically it is sewage sludge. It digests the thiodiglycol. The digested thiodiglycol becomes a brine solution. The water is discharged into rivers after sufficient treatment of the water solution.

Q-SH-Where would the water waste go if used here?

A-Rail cars would be used to transport the waste to a biotreatment facility. I do not know the location of the closest facility here in Utah. We can find out this information and get back to you.

Q-DB-How many tons per week can be treated?

A-We could process 8 (eight) ton containers per week over a five-day period, per box. (N.B. "box" refers to the containment box where the ton container is cradled, and the water is injected. The box is in place to limit the exposure of the workers to the process). Tooele could do 16 (sixteen) ton containers per week because there are two boxes available.

Q-GS-I am still concerned about energetics disposal using this process?

A-The plan is to decontaminate the materials to the point of no detectable concentration and used landfills to dispose of materials.

Q-So what about the energetics disposal?

A-I am not an expert in this area. I am not familiar with the ACWA processes. There are published reports that do address these specific issues.

Q-DK-What is the integrity of the ton containers?

A-These ton containers are very high quality. There is a very low-pressure build up when the water is added. They are well within the design specifications.

Q-DK-What is done to provide secondary containment during this process?

A-Yes, the box provides secondary containment, although the design is made to prevent leaks, but the box does provide secondary containment.

Q-DD-Are there any discussions concerning using this procedure to address some of the agent stored here in the bulk containers in Tooele? Could the equipment be transferred here for our use?

A-The facility operates very successfully at CSMDS and has not actively looked at applying the process to Tooele. Applying this technology would require building the equivalent of 4 Aberdeen type facilities here to handle the bulk mustard quantity. I do not know of the advantages of using the in-situ process with the VX because it can be incinerated directly. I cannot find any inherent advantages.

Q-DK-I am interested in the health effects of what is left over regarding the hydrolysate compounds etc.

A-The MSDS is being updated and will be provided to the Commission. The resulting compounds are less toxic than VX. These compounds are a dermal hazard not an inhalation hazard.

Q-Cindy King- Utah Sierra Club: Why is the process using the ton containers and not the ammunition type weaponry?

A-There was additional consideration was because the ton containers were stored outside. We were concerned about terrorist attacks after September 11. The viewpoint was taken of how do we reduce the risk from the outdoor storage? Disposing the stockpile as quickly as possible seemed the appropriate answer because they were susceptible to attacks.

Q-JG-What is the target date of having boxes set-up to begin agent destruction to point of completion? What about Aberdeen and Newport?

A-The CAMDS boxes are already set up. We will start testing within the next couple of days. This process should be finished within a week. I do not have the briefing materials on Aberdeen/Newport. My understanding is that there is ongoing construction to make a building a building within a building to hold the neutralization technology (at Aberdeen). If additional funding comes through, the destruction operations should begin by July and finish by December 2002, January 2003 time frame. Following that, it will require another year time frame to dispose of the empty ton containers. A modified neutralization facility is being built in Aberdeen. Congress is looking to determine if the funding is available to implement this program.

Q-JG-More specifically, how many times can Aberdeen treat agent?

A- At Aberdeen, the destruction rate is 12 (twelve) ton containers per day, 7 days per week, 84-ton containers per week. Our initial focus is on destroying the mustard then the destruction of the containers. There hasn't been a final decision made on the disposal rate in Newport. The only process that I have examined is just destroying the agent. I haven't looked at neutralized explosives and how they would be disposed of. ACWA has looked at it, but I don't know the hazards and characteristics would be.

Q-GW-Wouldn't this be a time to include this with the video by ACWA?

A-The video just addresses the agent destruction, not the second step, which are explosives. Depends on what the purpose of the video was.

Q-DB-Has there been a successful test on the supercritical water oxidation system with material?

A-The concept of supercritical water oxidation works very effectively. The process involves "burning" without flame by mineralizing organics. The problem with SCWO testing is material and system reliability.

Q-Mick Harrison Esq.-I have three points of information. There are published reports from the ACWA process that show alternatives for disposing of the energetics. If a task force is established, one issue that needs to be addressed is the operational problems that are occurring with incineration which create hazards for workers which, I believe can be avoided if the alternative technology were used. There are a number of very dangerous situations being experienced at the facility now from incineration. There is a need to look at the toxicity of what is left over from any of the processes, and a need to apply the same criteria to incineration. I believe that the identity of the chemicals from the stack at TOCDF on a routine basis that cause stack alarms needs to be conducted

Q-Citizen-What happened in 1995 in the testing stage?

A-In tests 2 and 3, there were temperature spikes. Now, the water is added in increments to avoid these spikes. Discussion about the testing in 1995 to give background as to what happened. We are using the data from 95 for the testing currently being conducted.

Q-What about the variability in the stockpile?

A- It is 85-95% pure. There is no heel with VX like there is with HD.

With the in-situ process there have not been the same problems with VX.

Q-JG-When venting VX tons, is there any VX released? Are they testing for it? How much salt is going to a landfill?

A-The figures regarding the amount of salt collected from the biotreatment process can be obtained. I do not have this information

tonight. CAMDS testing is conducted a process by sparking with nitrogen. All the processes are monitored, the boxes are being monitored with mini-cams, TWA response and an IDLH response, shower monitoring etc.

Additional questions regarding the presentation were withheld until after the remaining presentations.

Discussion: There is support for creating a task force for utilizing alternate technologies. Members of the Commission agree.

A motion was made to form task force made by Jane Bowman
A second to that motion was made by Gene White

DD-Before we form a task force, we need to define what it means and what it's goals would be. This is a very technical issue and could take more expertise than the Commission has. We need to be careful and define what the task force would do.

JB-Want to ensure that this committee will look at the alternate technologies. Are there other suggestions to be made about where to go for more information on alternate technologies and have it brought to the committee?

DD-Don't know at this time, valuable to know if the Army is willing to discuss the potential of alternate technologies.

DK-I propose and make a motion that the State Science Advisor assist the Commission in finding the proper contacts and information as to the Army's interest in this technology, and applying it to the stockpile here in Tooele.

MK- We will need to find the right people to get questions answered. I will be happy to work on this.

JB-With the above process in place I withdraw my motion to form a study committee.

GW-I also withdrawal my motion

Citizen Comment: The Commissioners should feel free to contact the ACWA program. They have the information that the Commission needs and would be happen to send it to whomever is interested.

3. Oquirrh Mountain Status, Neutralization process:

No presentation at this meeting. We will reschedule for the May meeting.

4. Oquirrh Mountain Status, Stockpile report- Mr. Harold Oliver

(refer to handouts). Mr. Oliver will provide the MSDS to the Commission. Presentation handout materials were provided. No agent operations were conducted during the Olympics. The GB campaign has been completed.

5. Air Security Status- Mr. Harold Oliver

Presentation materials were distributed. The material describes the procedure for secured airspace violations. Reports are made each time the airspace has been violated. There have been approximately 6 reports of air space violations since January. The majority of the aircraft are small airplanes, and local pilots unathwarted restriction.

6. Program status-Monte Caldwell

Presentation materials were distributed.

Q-DD-Do you have any idea on the Aberdeen and Newport schedules?

When will they be ready to begin neutralization?

A-Aberdeen beginning as early as July, 2002, if funding is available. The Newport baseline schedule begins in 2005 and ends in 2006.

7. Plant Status-Tom Kurkjy

Presentation materials were distributed. The GB campaign is complete as of 3/15/02. It was 20% of the national stockpile. The VX changeover activities have begun. There have been no detectable agent release since the last meeting. There was a discussion of the Action Level 3 incidents. The investigations are complete. The information in the investigations is contained in the handout. The capability of the equipment was not exceeded. The upper limit that had been set was exceeded, resulting in a potential exposure. There has been one (1) Level 3 incident since last meeting. It involved an overpacked leaker (155 projectile) in a ton container cradle was put on the conveyor. One projectile fell off the cradle. The ACAMS alarm went off. Medical evaluations were completed on the staff who were in the area.

There was no harm to human health. The cause of the accident was related to the overpack which was not secured in the cradle. This procedure is being revised.

Q-SH-How far did the overpack fall?

A-About four feet. It fell on the lid and bounced on the other end, broke the seal and allowed agent to escape from the overpack

Q-JG-Was this a ton cradle? Is this a ton container cut in half?

A-No, this is a way to convey the overpacks into the toxic area. It is not specifically designed for the overpacks. It just fits the tons to transport the overpacks to minimize the manual handling of the overpacks.

Q-DK-Are there any modifications planned to make a better fit?

A-This is part of the procedure that is being revised.

Q-JB In the in-situ VX/HD presentation, why did the gentleman in the photo have no protective gear on?

A-The photograph was from a simulated exercise.

Q-GW-Was it possible that the container was damaged prior to dropping it? This was a 155mm projectile, it was identified as a leaker and don't know if there was damage prior. All munitions are monitored prior to opening the transport vehicle, and was monitored and no readings on the palate of material, the leak occurred when the seal was broken.

Q-JG-Could I have a clarification of dates about the agent operation during the Olympics?

A-Operations were stopped February 6 and began again on February 25. All agent was processed out of the GB ton containers prior to the start of the Paralympics. WE did have some empty ton containers to be rinsed and verified, but all of the GB agent was processed out of the ton containers prior to the Paralympics.

8. Citizen Concerns-

Mr. Mick Harrison mentioned that there is some pending litigation with the Army. He stated and commented on some various different information that has been gathered about these incidents. No materials were distributed.

Q- SH-Could we have a report from EG & G regarding the information and charges stated by Mr. Harrison?

Q- DK- Mr. Ormond, can you provide to us information regarding what was stated?

A- Mr. Ormond from EG&G stated that he will address commission at next meeting and provide as much information on this as is possible.

Mr. Harrison stated that some information and documents will be provided to backup his statements.

9. Next meeting –

There will be an update on the chemical surety inspection process by Mr. Oliver at the next meeting.

Our next meeting will be held May 16th in Salt Lake City. Debbie Kim will be on medical leave. Mr. Dan Bauer will be Acting Chair at that meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.